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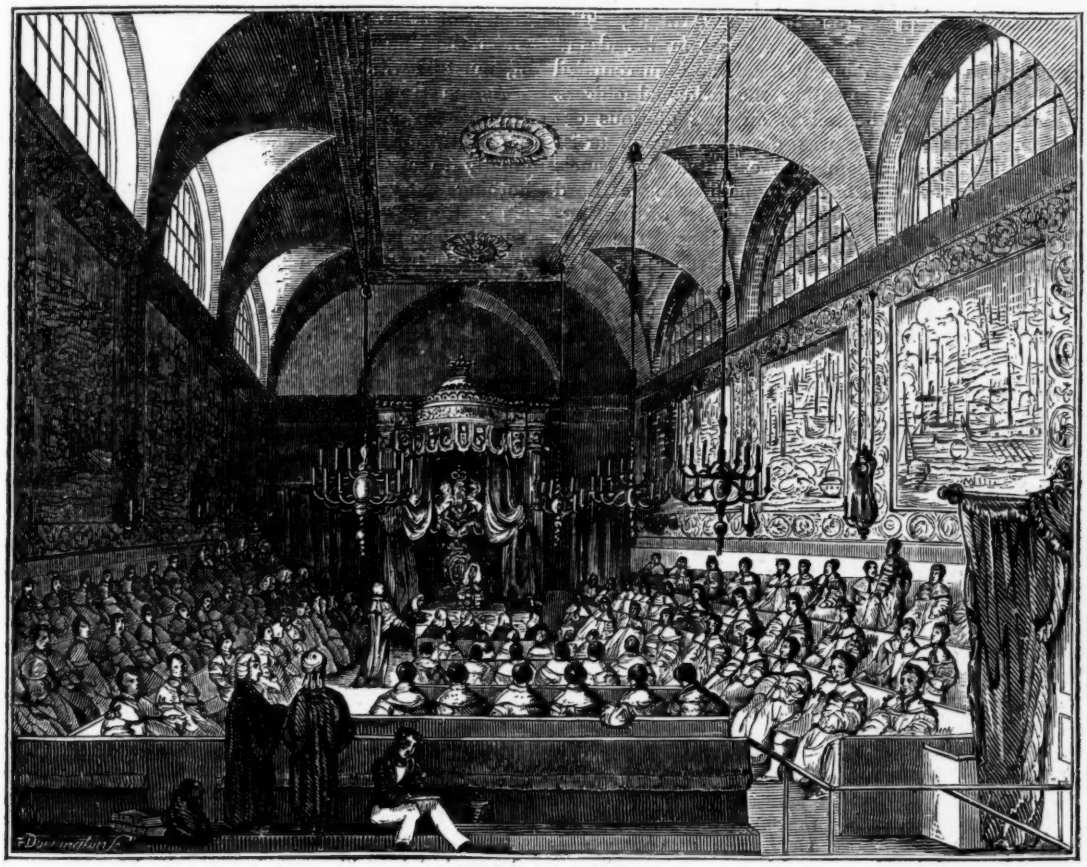
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION, APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT



Interior of the House of Lords.

II. THE HOUSE OF LORDS

THE House of Peers, or Upper House of Parliament, uses for its room of assembly, like the House of Commons, one of the remaining apartments of the old Palace of Westminster. The room in which it now meets has only been appropriated to that purpose since the year 1801, when the addition of the Irish representative Peers and Bishops imposed upon their Lordships the necessity of removing from an apartment which had long become inconveniently small for their increased and increasing numbers. The same inconvenience is felt in the present House of Peers; and, if a full attendance of the members were compelled, additional accommodation would be required.

The House of Peers is an oblong room, somewhat smaller than the House of Commons, having the King's Throne at the upper end, and at the lower end lofty folding-doors, by which the Commons are admitted: about one fourth of the room at the lower end, is divided off by a partition, nearly breast-high, called "the Bar," below which, in the engraving, are seen two barristers and a reporter. In the centre of the upper end of the House, stands the King's Throne, a magnificent chair of state and canopy, which was erected for the occasion of His late Majesty King George the Fourth opening, in person, the first Parliament of his reign. Next to the throne, proceeding down the House, is a seat called the woolsack placed across the House, and covered with scarlet cloth, on which the Lord Chancellor, or the Lord Speaker sits, when the King is not present; next to this are two other woolsacks, placed lengthways of the House, on which are the seats of the Judges when they attend, either on occasion of the King's being present, or their being summoned to give their opinions to the House on points of law; and also the seats of two Masters in Chancery, who are in constant attendance, being the messengers from the Lords to the Commons. Next below the woolsacks, is the "Table," at which the Clerks of the Parliament sit, and on which are laid all Bills, petitions, and other papers. Between the Table and the Bar, are several rows of benches, with raised backs, and covered with scarlet cloth for the Peers. Along the sides of the House, from the Bar to the foot of the

Throne, are similar rows of benches, rising one above another. The upper end of the lowest of these benches on the right hand, looking from the throne, is appropriated to the Bishops, and the correspondent bench on the other side to Dukes: other benches are also called the Marquesses', Earls', Viscounts', and Barons' benches; but, except on the occasion of a new Peer being introduced into the House for the first time, when he is carefully placed on the very seat belonging to his rank, there is no attention paid to place or precedence in the selection of a seat.

The side-walls of the house are covered with ancient tapestry, representing the triumph of the English Fleet over the Spanish Armada. The several pieces of the tapestry are set in broad and massive frames of wainscot-wood, and surrounded with medallions representing the principal officers who distinguished themselves on that glorious occasion. This tapestry was designed by an artist named Cornelius Vroom, and executed by Francis Spiering, for the Earl of Nottingham, who was Lord High-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of the English fleet, at a cost of 1628*l.* sterling. The Earl of Nottingham sold it to King James the First. The whole floor is covered with plain matting; the house is lighted by day, from the windows visible in the engraving, and at night, by chandeliers and some elegant bronze sconces.

At the upper end of the House are two doors, one on each side of the throne; that on the right hand, is the one by which the King enters when he comes down to open or prorogue the Session of Parliament; that on the left is for the entry of Peers. On the left-hand side of the House, immediately below the bar, is another door, for counsel, agents, witnesses, and other persons who may have occasion to attend the house. Immediately above this door, is a small space, railed off for the accommodation of the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, the principal officer of the House: it has curtains to draw round it, as may be seen in the engraving, and on the occasion of very interesting debates, serves, like the space above the ventilator of the House of Commons, to accommodate and conceal ladies, whose presence at its deliberations, the standing orders of the House strictly forbid.

When the House is in its usual sittings, all the space behind the Lord Chancellor's Woolsack, is deemed *out of the House*; and is open to peers' sons, and members of the House of Commons. For the general accommodation of the public who may wish to hear the debates, there is the space below the Bar; to which, within the last few years, has been added a gallery along the lower end of the House, for admission to either of which, a peer's order is necessary.

Immediately behind the upper-end of the House of Lords is a room, called the "Prince's Chamber," in which is a curious piece of old tapestry, representing the birth of Queen Elizabeth. In this room the King, when he comes in state to meet his Parliament, puts on his royal robes and crown, from whence it is also called the "Robing Room." Having so done, he enters the House by the door on the right hand, and takes his seat on the throne, surrounded by the great Officers of State; the Cap of Maintenance is borne on his right hand, and the Sword of State on his left: and, a little advanced in front, and on the right, stands the Lord High Chancellor. The King being seated, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod is sent to summon the House of Commons, who, in a few minutes, enter, headed by their Speaker, through the great folding doors at the bottom of the House, and advance to the Bar, making three reverences; the Speaker stands at the centre of the Bar, with his Mace laid on the Bar before him. His Majesty then reads his Speech, after hearing which the Commons retire, as immediately after does the King, attended by his suite.

When the King visits the House of Lords, ladies are permitted to be present, having tickets of admission for that purpose from Peers. From the great increase of the Peerage these admissions have become so numerous, that the whole body of the House, of late years, has been nearly filled to crowding, with ladies only, and very few Peers, except those immediately about the royal person, are to be seen. The display of beauty, and splendid magnificence of dress, which the Upper House of Parliament can then boast of, must be witnessed to be imagined.

As the House of Commons is an elective, so the House of Peers is an hereditary body. It is the prerogative of the King alone to elevate a person originally to a seat in the House; but, once there, nothing short of high-treason can deprive him, or his legitimate successors in the dignity, of that seat. The Peerage is divided into five orders; Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts, and Barons: they all wear robes of scarlet cloth, lined with white satin, on which their several ranks are designated by an appointed number of stripes of gold lace and ermine, or plain white fur, on the right breast and shoulder. These robes, however, are not worn, except when the King is present, when the royal assent is given to Acts of Parliament by commission, (on which occasion the commissioners only are robed,) and when a new Peer is introduced into the House for the first time, on which occasion the Lords concerned in the ceremony wear their robes. The Peers never wear their coronets but at a coronation.

The usual time for the House assembling for public and political business is four o'clock; but the hearing appeals, and other judicial business is transacted in the earlier part of the day. Three Peers are sufficient to constitute a house; and, before any business is entered upon, suitable prayers are read by a Bishop, during which the doors are closed.

The progress and stages of a Bill in the House of Lords are the same as in the Lower House, except that a Peer may introduce a Bill without obtaining leave. Unlike the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Lord High Chancellor (being a Peer of the Realm) is at liberty to address the House on any subject that may be before it; on such occasions, however, he quits the Woolsack for the time, and speaks from his place as a Peer.

When a Bill has passed through all its stages in both House of Parliament, it still requires the Royal Assent, to give it the force of a law; this is always given in the House of Peers; occasionally, but very rarely, by the King in person, generally by Commissioners appointed under the Great Seal for that purpose. The commission is directed to the Great Officers of State, and all the Peers who are Privy Councillors; three to form a quorum. Of this three, the Lord Chancellor is always one, and the other two, generally, one of his Majesty's Ministers and the Chairman of the Committees. The Commissioners having taken their seats, robed, and with their hats on, upon a bench immediately before the Throne, the Commons are summoned to attend; the Commission is then read, and afterwards the titles of the Acts, to each of which the Royal Assent is signified by the Clerk of the Crown, in words of Norman French, varying according to the nature of the Bill. To a Private Bill, the form is, *Soit fait comme il est desiré;* Let it be as is desired:—to a Public Bill, *Le Roi le veut;*

The King wills it, or consents to it:—to a Money Bill, the answer is longer, containing expressions of obligation, as well as mere words of consent, *Le Roi remercie ses bons sujets, accepte leur benevolence, et ainsi le veut;* The King thanks his good subjects, accepts their benevolence, and also wills it. The form of refusal, now so totally obsolete, that it is to be found only in history and the old records of long-past Parliaments, delicately avoided the direct expression of a negative, by the milder phrase, *Le Roi s'avisera;* The King will consider of it.

The Peers of the United Kingdom enjoy many great privileges; the principal of which, however, are, total exemption from personal arrest in any civil proceeding; and the right of being tried on any criminal charge by their Peers alone, who give their verdict, not upon oath, but upon their honour. All impeachments of high crimes and misdemeanours brought by the House of Commons, are also tried before the House of Lords. On these occasions, the place of trial is not the House itself, but Westminster Hall, fitted up for the purpose.

ANECDOTE OF THE PRESENT KING OF PRUSSIA.

Near Potsdam, in the reign of Frederick the Great, was a mill which interfered with the view from the windows of Sans Souci. Annoyed by this eye-sore to his favourite residence, the King sent to inquire the price for which the mill would be sold by its owner. "For no price," was the reply of the sturdy Prussian; and in a moment of anger Frederick gave orders that the mill should be pulled down. "The King may do this," said the miller, quietly folding his arms, "but there are laws in Prussia;" and forthwith he commenced proceedings against the Monarch, the result of which was that the Court sentenced Frederick to rebuild the mill, and to pay besides a large sum of money as compensation for the injury which he had done. The King was mortified, but had the magnanimity to say, addressing himself to his courtiers, "I am glad to find that just laws and upright judges exist in my kingdom." The above anecdote is well known to every reader of Prussian history, but it is necessary to be related here as an introduction to that which follows:—About three years ago the present head of the honest miller's family (his name is Frank,) who had in due course of time succeeded to the hereditary possession of his little estate, finding himself, after a long struggle with losses occasioned by that war which brought ruin into many a house besides his own, involved in pecuniary difficulties that had become insurmountable, wrote to the present King of Prussia, reminding him of the refusal experienced by Frederick the Great at the hands of his ancestor, and stating that, if his Majesty now entertained a similar desire to obtain possession of the property, it would be very agreeable to him, in his present embarrassed circumstances, to sell the mill. The King wrote immediately, with his own hand, the following reply:—

"My dear Neighbour—I cannot allow you to sell the mill; it must remain in your possession as long as one member of your family exists; for it belongs to the history of Prussia. I lament, however, to hear that you are in circumstances of embarrassment; and I therefore send you 6,000 dollars (about 1,000*l.* sterling) to arrange your affairs, in the hope that this sum will be sufficient for the purpose.

"Consider me always your affectionate neighbour,

"Frederick William."

Truth.—Petrarch, a celebrated Italian poet, who flourished above 400 years ago, recommended himself to the confidence and affection of Cardinal Colonna, in whose family he resided, by his candour and strict regard to truth. A violent quarrel occurred in the household of this nobleman, which was carried so far, that recourse was had to arms: the cardinal wished to know the foundation of this affair; and that he might be able to decide with justice, he assembled all his people, and obliged them to bind themselves, by a most solemn oath on the Gospels, to declare the whole truth. Every one, without exception, submitted to this determination; even the Bishop of Luna, brother to the cardinal, was not excused. Petrarch, in his turn, presenting himself to take the oath, the cardinal closed the book, and said, "As to you, Petrarch, your word is sufficient."

TRUE HUMILITY.

True humility, while it brings to light our own sins, is ever sure to cover a multitude of the sins of others.

The man who is the most sensible of his own failings, will always be heard to talk the least of the failings of others. It is the proud man, the proud professor of the Gospel, who is the reviling man, the censorious professor.

Pride takes a pleasure in bringing to light the infirmities of others, that itself may be exalted; while humility delights in contemplating their excellencies, that it may be laid by them still lower in its own esteem, and be led to imitate their graces.

The reason why we are censorious and hard-hearted is simply this,—we have not the Spirit of Christ, and are none of his. Never let us deem ourselves Christians, till we bear some resemblance to our meek, lowly, and compassionate Master. The religion which he puts into the heart of his followers, softens the character, sweetens the temper, and enlivens all the tender affections of the soul, and fills it with kindness, and with love.——Bradley's *Sermons.*

What shall we do, when our favours are requited with ingratitude? Repeat them, though they should seem so be repeated in vain. Let us persevere in our kindness, even when it may appear to be thrown away. There is no reason why a crowd of ungrateful receivers should make us unwilling to deserve their gratitude. Let us persevere in showing kindness, even after we despair of meeting with a grateful return. Cease not from well-doing, but pursue the undeviating course of the just.——Seneca.

Passions are the gales of life; it should be our care to see that they rise not into a tempest.

Charles the Second, hearing the celebrated Vossius, a freethinker, repeating some incredible stories of the Chinese, turning to those about him, said, "This learned divine is a very strange man; he believes every thing but the Bible."——Addison.

"In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment;

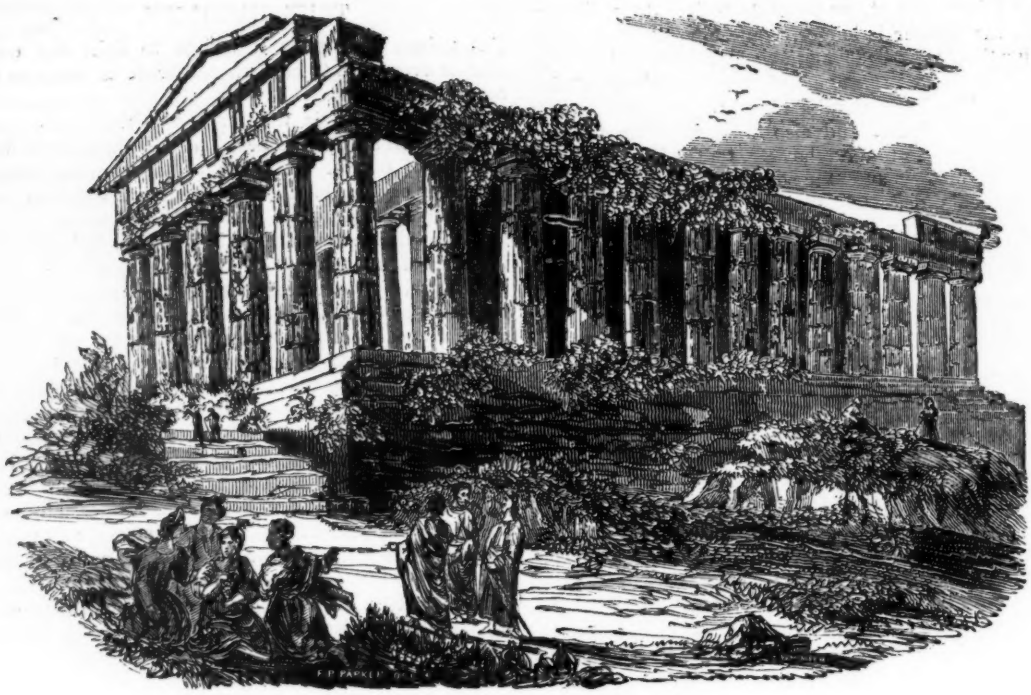
"GOOD LORD DELIVER US."——Litany

In the dark season of distress,
In sickness, want, or woe;
If friends desert, or foes oppress,
Or trouble lay me low:
If 'reft of those I fondly love,
From earthly ills I flee,
To seek sweet comfort from above,
Good Lord deliver me.

If wealth be mine, from all the snares
Which riches with them bring,
Oppression, avarice, worldly cares,
Ambition's goading sting;
From pride, and from that worst offence,
Forgetfulness of Thee,
Whose hand that wealth did first dispense,
Good Lord deliver me.

When on the bed of death, a prey
To gloomy thoughts I lie,
Or worn by slow disease away,
Or rack'd with agony;
Stung with remorse for what hath been,
And dreading what may be,
When death hath closed this mortal scene;
Good Lord deliver me.

And oh! in that appalling hour,
When clouds around thee spread,
Thou comest array'd in pomp and power,
To judge both quick and dead;
When trembling, shrinking from thy face,
Thy servant thou shalt see,
A suppliant at the bar of grace,
Good Lord deliver me!——J. L.



The Temple of Concord at Girgenti, in Sicily.

ANCIENT TEMPLES.

I.

THE great temple at Girgenti* (the ancient Agrigentum), in Sicily, dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, is supposed to have been built by Timoleon, about 337 years before Christ, so that it has stood more than twenty centuries. Timoleon erected it as a triumph of his conquests, which are celebrated by the Greek historians. There were, at Girgenti, two other large temples, of which there are nearly equal remains; those, namely, of Juno Lucina, and of Concord.

The last mentioned is the most commanding feature of Girgenti†, as being conspicuously seen from every point. Hercules and Æsculapius had likewise temples; and Cicero reproaches Verres, the plundering prætor of Sicily, with having stolen and taken away by violence some of the finest works of Grecian art, when it had reached its zenith—the sculpture of Myron and the painting of Zeuxis. But of all the ruined temples of Agrigentum, that of Jupiter Olympius excites, in viewing it, the greatest surprise, from its stupendous magnitude. The extreme length 360 feet, width 174, the diameter of the fluted semi-columns of the Doric order 23, and their height 64. The sides were composed (a very remarkable instance) of fourteen semi-columns, and there were seven perfect ones at each end. The flutings or grooves were so large as to admit of a man standing within them. So vast were the dimensions, and consequent expense, that it was never completely finished.

This mensuration was most accurately taken in English feet, by two professional gentleman, in 1822.

In their plan and construction the Grecian temples admitted but of little variety, they may be almost said to have been uniform, as being perfectly symmetrical in design, whether their dimensions were great or small. A cell, answering to the nave in our cathedrals, was sometimes open to the air (*hypæthral*), when too spacious for a roof, or when small, very dark and gloomy, with the statue only, illuminated, and thus better adapted to exhibit oracular trickeries, for which the Sicilians were eminently notorious.

In those countries, under a sultry sun, the lengthened colonnades were necessary for the reception of the numerous worshippers who daily frequented it, and for the display of some of the ceremonies which were performed there.

Of the great works of ancient architects, the most remarkable was the temple of Solomon at Jerusalem. The *first* temple at Jerusalem, built by Hiram, as chief architect, and as described in the Book of Kings, chap. vii. and ix., and Jeremiah chap. xv., has occasioned many learned commentaries, the result of which is, that the following measurement appears to be the just one. It was 437 feet long and 145 wide, and the total height from the base, including the walled rock, 218 feet from the lower area.

Not a single mass of ruin remains to this day of the temple of Diana at Ephesus; but from what can be ascertained of its site, it came next to the last-mentioned, in point of extent. The Parthenon at Athens has 100 feet of length less than the temple at Girgenti; and its other proportions accordingly.

There has been a received but unauthenticated opinion, that all the Grecian temples were considerably less than our great cathedrals; and the majority of them were certainly so. But if it be considered, that our gothic ecclesiastical structures consist of several distinct parts under one roof, and if they be measured separately, we shall find that the cell or Girgenti exceeded any single nave now existing in Europe, if our own St. Paul's, and St. Peter's at Rome, were excepted. The nave of old St. Paul's, formerly the largest in England, was only 335 feet long; 25 feet less than the above, with its two porticoes. We cannot sufficiently admire the exquisite skill which the Greeks displayed in the arts, but

* Girgenti lies on the western coast of Sicily, opposite to Tunis; and when it was included in the Roman province of Magna Græcia, much jealousy was excited by its commercial intercourse with the Carthaginians. This city, with its commodious port, was first founded by the colonizing Greeks, 600 years before Christ, and called by them Acragas; by the Romans Agrigentum; and by the Sicilians Girgenti.

† DIMENSIONS of the TEMPLE of CONCORD:

Front	55 ft. 9 in.	Span of Arches . .	5 ft. 6 in.
Side	129 „ 5 „	Height of Piers . .	11 „ 7 „
Length of Cella .	52 „ 10 „	Width of do. . . .	2 „ 8 „
Width of do. . . .	24 „ 9 „	Thickness of do.	3 —

we have, in this instance, to admire it as displayed in that grace and symmetry, so admirable in those buildings which were dedicated to the religion of the ancient world. But though science and taste may gratify the judgment, they do not delight the imagination in the same degree as the contemplation of "the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault," so wrought as to have the appearance of molten metal, and so lofty as to seem to exceed the powers of human construction. And, more than all, when we enter our magnificent cathedrals, we have our thoughts and feelings raised, not only to the contemplation of the beautiful specimens of human skill, but to the majesty and greatness of Him who is there to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

MIGRATORY BIRDS.

No. II.

Swallows.

Among the migratory birds, none have attracted more attention, or been the cause of more difference of opinion, than the Swallows. Linnæus, the great Swedish naturalist, unfortunately for science, relying too much on the accounts furnished him by his correspondents, recorded his belief that, in many instances, the swallows, instead of leaving this country at the approach of winter, retreated to holes of rocks and other places of concealment, and remained there, in a torpid state, until the return of spring. It was even asserted by Olaus Magnus, a Bishop of Upsal, that in the north of Europe, the peasants were frequently in the habit of drawing up, from the bottom of ponds and lakes, by means of nets, numbers of these birds.

Although later writers did not agree in all that had been stated by their predecessors on this subject, still, countenanced by the learned Swede, who was then deservedly considered the greatest naturalist that Europe had ever produced, they believed that it was not an uncommon thing, for these birds to remain dormant during the winter. Later observations have, however, clearly proved that the only effect produced on them, by exposure to cold, is that of benumbing their faculties, and quickly depriving them of life; it has also been ascertained, that they moult their feathers during our winter months, and when they return in the spring, they are clothed in a new suit.

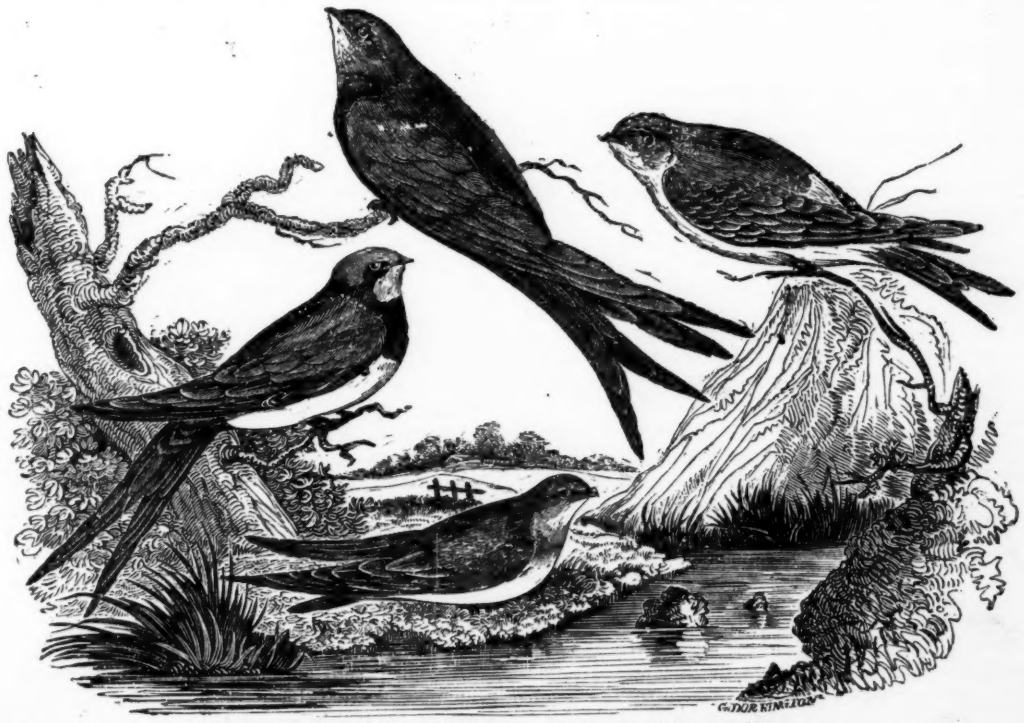
At first we are apt to be startled at the idea of the immense distances traversed by birds during their migrations, but if we submit our remarks to calculation, the difficulty of the performance at once vanishes; since the longest flight across the sea, which a swallow is likely to take in his journey to Africa, would only be from the south of France, across the Mediterranean, a distance not much exceeding 400 miles; and, as a bird flies at the rate of 60 miles* an hour, it would only be on the wing for about seven hours, a matter of very little difficulty. But even this journey might be avoided; for if, instead of crossing the sea, it proceeded over the Peninsula of Spain and Portugal, a short trip would bring the feathered traveller to his winter-quarters. If the migratory route of any other bird, with whose movements we are acquainted, were submitted to the same test, we should, no doubt, find a similar result.

The swallow-tribe is scattered over the surface of nearly the whole globe; but in the regions between the tropics, where the insects on which these birds subsist are found in abundance throughout the year, the instinct of migration is not displayed.

There are four species of the swallow-tribe known in England: the House-Martin, whose well-known nest is found under the eaves of houses and in the angles of windows; the Chimney-Swallow, that builds its nest in old chimneys, barns, and hay-stacks; the Sand-Martin, that frequents holes in sand-banks; and the largest of the tribe, the Swift, or Great Black Swallow.

The House-Martin arrives in England about the beginning of April, and is followed about the middle of the same month, by the Chimney-Swallow and

* Swallows have been considered to fly at the rate of sixty miles in the hour, Swifts at the rate of ninety.



The House-Martin—The Swift—The Sand-Martin—The Chimney-Swallow.

the Sand-Martin; but it is near the end of April before the Swift makes its appearance.

The swallows belong to that tribe of birds called by CUVIER *Fissirostri*, (*Cloven Beaks*,) the gape of the beak extending as far back as the hindmost angle of the eye. The swallow takes its prey upon the wing, and this apparently disproportionate gape affords it a better chance of seizing insects during its airy evolutions. In the construction of its nest the House-Martin proves itself much more skilful than any other species of the swallow-tribe; its mode of proceeding is thus described by that acute observer of nature, the Rev. Gilbert White.

"About the beginning of May, if the weather be fine, the martin begins to think in earnest of providing a mansion for its family. The crust or shell of this nest seems to be formed of such dirt or loam as comes most readily to hand, and is tempered and wrought together with little bits of broken straws, to render it tough and tenacious. As this bird often builds against a perpendicular wall, without any projecting ledge under, it requires its utmost efforts to get the first foundation firmly fixed, so that it may safely carry the superstructure.

"On this occasion the bird not only clings with its claws, but partly supports itself by strongly inclining its tail against the wall, making that a fulcrum: and thus steadied, it works and plasters the materials into the face of the brick or stone. But then, that this work may not, while it is soft and green, pull itself down by its own weight, the provident architect has prudence and forbearance enough not to advance her work too fast; but by building only in the morning, and by dedicating the rest of the day to food and amusement, gives it sufficient time to dry and harden.

"About half an inch seems to be a sufficient layer for a day. By this method, in about ten or twelve days, is formed an hemispheric nest, with a small opening towards the top, strong, compact, and warm, and perfectly fitted for the purposes for which it was intended." This nest is afterwards lined carefully with feathers, and is fit to receive the eggs and become a dwelling to the young."

Experiment has proved that the instinct of these birds directs them, on their return in spring, to the same nests they occupied in the previous season, and and if the nest is not destroyed they take possession of their old habitation. The swift and the sand-martin are noticed as being much more slovenly in the construction of their nests than either of the other two species. The able naturalist above quoted, thus describes the character of these birds.

"The swallows are a most inoffensive, harmless, entertaining, social, and useful tribe of birds; they touch no fruit in our gardens; delight, all except one species, in attaching themselves to our houses, amuse us with their migrations, songs, and marvellous agility, and clear our outlets from the annoyances of gnats and other troublesome insects."

The Swallows are all soft-billed birds, their feet and claws also are badly constructed for defence or annoyance, but their rapidity of flight is such that they fearlessly attack, or rather tease by their numbers, hawks, owls, and other birds of prey, till they have at last driven them out of their neighbourhood.

CHILDREN should be enured as early as possible to acts of charity and mercy. Constantine, as soon as his son could write, employed *his* hand in signing pardons, and delighted in conveying, through *his* mouth, all the favours he granted. A noble introduction to sovereignty, which is instituted for the happiness of mankind.——JORTIN.

ROBERT BURNS.

WE inserted, in a former number, an extract from a Lecture on Popular Literature, for the purpose of pointing out the futility of some of the objections frequently urged against cultivating the minds of the poorer orders; and also for the purpose of citing the cases of some individuals, who had improved and refined themselves by education, without becoming in any way unfit to discharge the duties of their humble station in life. The man of whom we are now going to give a slight biographical sketch, was, we need hardly say, possessed of genius and powers of mind, which not only raised him vastly above the persons named in that paper, but which have seldom been surpassed in any rank or condition of society. There are, however, some circumstances in the history of Robert Burns, which should be known to every humble candidate for knowledge and fame: neither, we trust, can the principal incidents in the life of such a man be uninteresting to any of our readers.

Robert Burns was born in 1759, on the 25th of January;—and it happens, by a singular coincidence, that the corresponding day of the year 1772, witnessed the birth of another Scotch Poet, who has raised himself to celebrity, from a yet humbler origin than the Ayrshire ploughman,—we mean the simple, unsophisticated James Hogg, better known in the literary world by his more poetical name of the Ettrick Shepherd.

Burns was born in the parish of Alloway, about two miles from the town of Ayr, in a cottage by the way-side, which was long pointed out to the traveller as his place of nativity; though, we believe, it has since been pulled down, and the timbers of the roof have been formed into boxes and various articles, highly prized by the admirers of the great bard. At the time of his birth, his father was gardener to Mr. Ferguson of Ayr; though he afterwards became tenant successively of two or three small farms in the neighbourhood. Humble as was this station, we must not, however, suppose that it carried with it all the disadvantages incident to a like situation in South Britain. The Scotch peasantry enjoy great advantages for obtaining education. They have a school established by law in every parish, where elementary instruction may be obtained at the lowest price;—and, still more, the habits and modes of thinking of the parents lead them to practise the utmost self-denial, in order to procure yet further information for their children. Neither can we forbear to pause for one moment, for the purpose of remarking, that, when we consider in how great a degree the rural population of Scotland is free from crime,—a fact known and acknowledged on all sides,—this circumstance, even assisted, as we admit it to be, by some others, favourable to the innocence of the people, must be allowed to speak volumes in behalf of the great cause of popular education.

The father of Burns was an extraordinary character, of high principles, and of no common talents; and he yielded to none, in his anxiety to procure every advantage of instruction for his children. Beside sending them to the parish-school, he paid a master to instruct them at home; so that Robert, the eldest, not only was taught to read and to write, but was conversant with the English grammar, and even learned some French; to which knowledge he afterwards added the elements of geometry and mensuration. Burns, therefore, started in his literary career with advantages superior to many, who have since been called self-taught poets. Still it should be remembered, that he passed the first twenty-three years of his life in severe toil. He was literally, as

he styled himself, a ploughman. His father worked his farms only by the labour of himself and his sons; a labour, that was exacted to the utmost: and it is melancholy to think that, even with the closest industry, combined with the strictest frugality, and the humblest mode of living, the poor old man was unsuccessful in all his efforts, and, after having been obliged to retire successively from three farms, died at last in poverty. Still, during the few hours of leisure that this laborious course of life afforded, Robert Burns eagerly devoured every book, which chance, or the kindness of friends, threw in his way. He also sharpened his intellect by forming an association of young men, who met periodically to discuss subjects of importance and interest: but, much more than all, he occupied his mind, during this period of his life, in composing several of those poems, which have since inscribed his name in the rolls of fame. As he guided the plough or wielded the flail, his mind expatiated in the bright regions of fancy; and the little incidents of agricultural life, and the simple habits of agricultural economy, gave rise to the beautiful poems of the "Field Mouse," the "Mountain Daisy," and the most delightful of all, the "Cotter's Saturday Night." It is also remarkable that, while thus labouring for a bare subsistence, and never having extended his personal observation beyond the neighbouring market-town, Burns was yet able to form a just estimate of his own powers, and was conscious that they qualified him to take his place among the eminent and the great. At the same time, apprehensive that his humble and indigent circumstances would bar him from assuming his proper station, he felt within himself a restlessness and uneasiness, which we could well understand in such a mind. In a letter written to his father, when he was twenty-two years of age, he says, "As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay; I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes:—indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which, I hope, have been remembered ere it is yet too late."

But at length the time arrived, that was to form the great epoch in the life of Burns. He had lost his excellent father; he had made an imprudent marriage; and farming had proved unprofitable. In despair, he came to the resolution to go out to Jamaica in the capacity of an assistant on the estate of Dr. Douglas;—but not having sufficient money to pay his passage, he was advised to endeavour to obtain the means, by publishing his poems by subscription. The success of the experiment exceeded his most sanguine wishes: they were warmly and universally admired, and procured for their author a sum of money, sufficient not only to induce him to abandon his design of quitting his native country, but also to give him the means of establishing himself in credit and comfort, in his former line of life, in any part of Scotland. His reputation also procured him invitations to Edinburgh, for which place he set out in November, 1786, and where he was received by the learned, by the great, and by the gay, with a cordiality and hospitality, which at once placed him among society widely different from any to which he before had been used, and which also, we fear, engendered tastes and habits, which were most injurious to his respectability, to his morals and religion, and to his happiness in his after life.

It is our desire to speak with the utmost tenderness of such a man as Burns. We wish it ever to be remembered, that to the end of his career, he maintained an integrity and independence of spirit, which no poverty could bend, and which we delight to see associated with so much genius. But we make no apology for his vices; neither, certainly, is it our intention to follow Burns through those scenes of irregularity, which at length brought his career to a premature close on the 21st of July, 1796, in his thirty-seventh year. Our object is principally to illustrate one point: by the successful sale of his poems, Burns had found himself in possession of nearly 500*l.*; a sum, that was affluence to one whose means had always been so scanty, and certainly forming a sufficient capital to have enabled him to embark steadily and systematically in the reputable occupation of agriculture. In fact, he took the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, a few miles above Dumfries, on which he entered at Whitsuntide 1788. But his rustic labours soon grew distasteful to him, and were neglected; every thing on his farm went amiss, and, after an occupation of three years and a half, he resigned it into the hands of his landlord. In the mean while, Burns had also been appointed to an office of no large emolument in the excise; but this appointment, while it diverted him from the steady prosecution of his agricultural labours, threw him also into situations by no means favourable to the virtue of temperance; and from this, as well as from other concurrent circumstances, he became gradually more and more addicted to excesses in drinking, which undermined his health, and brought him to an early grave. It may also be added that, although many passages in his writings, both in prose and verse, show that Burns was deeply impressed with the *sentiment* of religion; a sentiment, in which we can hardly conceive how by any possibility a real poet can be deficient; yet his devotional feelings do not appear to have sprung from sound Religious principle nor to have been sustained and strengthened by regular, constant, and systematic acts of worship. In short, the main purpose for which we have sketched the life of this extraordinary and unfortunate man, has been to show how the brightest genius may be obscured, and a mind of the highest and noblest aspirations may be laid low, by want of steadiness, by want of prudence, by want of perseverance, and above all by want of practical Religion.

Burns is not properly an instance of lowly talent cultivated and improved by its owner to his cost: his misfortunes were occasioned by other causes. His cultivated intellect would have added both to his respectability and to his happiness, if, at the same time, he had learned to control his appetite, and acquire habits of regular application to business,—making his poetry a solace from care, a recreation from toil, or, to put it upon a lower footing, a source of profit, valuable and acceptable, but still secondary and subordinate to some fixed employment.

Immediately after the death of Burns, noble subscriptions were raised, in behalf of his destitute family: splendid monuments have since been erected to his memory.

The Scottish peasant feels his heart swell with pride, as he recollects that he is of the same country, and of the same class with the AYRSHIRE PLOUGHMAN. We think that not an honour beyond his

desert has been lavished upon his memory as a genius:—we only wish his sad fate to be borne in mind, in order that it may serve as a beacon to mark the rocks on which genius may make shipwreck, when it is not under the guidance of Religion, and not kept steady in its course, by regular and constant occupation.

THE LION-HEAD OF THE CENTURION.

IN September, 1740, Commodore George Anson sailed from England with a small squadron of ships, consisting of the Centurion, of 60 guns, the Gloucester, the Severn, the Pearl, the Wager, and the Trial sloop, with two victuallers, and about 470 land-forces, under the command of Colonel Cracherode. The Severn and the Pearl were separated from him on the coast of Brazil, whence they returned to England. All his other ships, except the Centurion, were either lost or destroyed, for want of hands to navigate them. He burned the town of Paita in Peru, where he found a good deal of plunder. He likewise took the rich Manilla galleon, valued at 400,000*l.* sterling; and, after undergoing an incredible number of difficulties, he arrived at Spithead on the 15th of June, 1744. His treasure was conveyed in a triumphant manner to London, where it was received amidst the shouts and acclamations of the people. He himself was soon after created a peer of the realm. He died in 1762, aged sixty-two years.

The Lion, carved in wood, which adorned the head of his ship, the Centurion, was placed, some years ago, on a pedestal in the stable-yard of a little inn at Waterbeach, adjoining Goodwood Park, near Chichester, the seat of the Duke of Richmond, with the following inscription:

> Stay, Traveller, awhile, and view
> One who has travell'd more than you.
> Quite round the globe, through each degree,
> Anson and I have plough'd the sea,
> Torrid and frigid zones have past;
> And safe ashore arrived at last,
> In ease with dignity appear,
> He in the House of Lords, I here.

In the course of the last year, this *Lion* was removed to Windsor, as a present to his Majesty; and the following lines, in imitation of the original inscription, have been sent to us on the occasion of this movement:

> Such *was* this travell'd Lion's boast,
> Contented with his humbler post,
> While Anson sat in lordly state,
> To hear his fellow lords debate.
> But travell'd now to Windsor's dome,
> The Lion boasts a prouder home,
> Which our brave Sailor-king affords,
> Than Anson in the House of Lords.

ANNIVERSARIES IN MARCH.

MONDAY 18th.

Edward surnamed the *Martyr*, Saxon king of England, was crowned, A.D. 975, by the celebrated Archbishop Dunstan, in despite of the intrigues of his step-mother Elfrida, who endeavoured to place her own son Ethelred, his half and younger brother, on the throne. At the time of his coronation, he was, according to some accounts, only twelve years old; but according to others, fourteen or sixteen. His enjoyment of the royal authority was of very short duration; his mother-in-law resolved to secure by murder, what her influence and intrigues had been insufficient to obtain; and in the fourth year of his reign, caused him to be stabbed in the back, by one of her retainers, as he was drinking. The youth and innocence of the prince, together with his tragical death, roused the compassion of the people to such a degree, that they believed miracles to be wrought at his tomb, and gave him the appellation of Martyr, which was confirmed by Pope Innocent IV., who, in 1245, directed the anniversary of his death to be kept as a festival of the church.

1745 *Sir Robert Walpole*, Knight of the Garter, first Earl of Orford, and many years prime-minister to Kings George I. and II.—Died.

1748 Died, *Laurence Sterne*, author of *Yorick's Sermons*, *Tristram Shandy*, *The Sentimental Journey*, &c.

TUESDAY 19th.

ON this day, in the year before Christ 720, happened the first lunar eclipse, of which history gives any account.

1355 The custom of impressing seamen, to man the king's ships, commenced.

1719 A surprising meteor appeared about 8 o'clock in the evening, and was visible throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland.

1751 Died, *Captain Thomas Coram*, the philanthropic contriver and patron of the Foundling Hospital. He was a captain in the Merchant Service, and at one time worth considerable money, which he sacrificed in his charitable pursuits, so as, for some years previous to his death, to be reduced to live on a pension of about £100 a year.

WEDNESDAY 20th.

The Spring quarter commences, the sun entering the constellation Aries, or the Ram, at five minutes and six seconds past eight at night.

1413. Henry IV., King of England (first sovereign of the house of Lancaster), died in the Jerusalem chamber, in his palace at Westminster.

1727 Died, *Sir Isaac Newton*. He was born, 25th December, 1642. Interred in Westminster Abbey.

1731 A destructive earthquake at Foggia, in the kingdom of Naples, by which half the town was destroyed, and 2000 persons perished in the ruins.

1751 Died Frederick, Prince of Wales, eldest son of King George II., and father of King George III.

1793 Died, *William Murray*, first Earl of Mansfield, upwards of thirty years Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench.

THURSDAY 21st.

St. Benedict, the founder of the order of Benedictine Monks, or, as they were called from the colour of their dress, Black Friars. He was born in the dukedom of Spoleto, in Italy, about the year 480; and died, A.D. 542.

1556 *Thomas Cranmer*, Archbishop of Canterbury, suffered martyrdom at Oxford, under Queen Mary, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

1766 A large spot, calculated to be three times the size of the earth, passed over the centre of the sun's disk.

1801 The battle of Alexandria in Egypt, in which the French were defeated; but the English commander, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, was mortally wounded, and died on the 28th.

1804 Duke d'Enghien shot by order of Buonaparte.

1829 A severe shock of an earthquake felt throughout the province of Murcia, in Spain.

1832 This day was appointed to be held as a day of general fast and humiliation, on account of the Cholera.

FRIDAY 22nd.

1665 The plague which desolated London, as well as several other parts of the kingdom, this year, broke out.

1740 Porto-bello, a strong town and sea-port, in Spanish America, taken by the English forces, under Admiral Vernon.

SATURDAY 23rd.

1757 Chandernagore, a city and fortress on the Ganges, in Bengal, which had been granted by the native princes to the French, as a commercial settlement, was taken by the English troops under general (afterwards lord) Clive.

1801 *Paul*, Emperor of Russia, assassinated as St. Petersburgh.

1809 *Kotzebue*, the German dramatic author, and afterwards a political writer in the employ of Russia, was assassinated.

1829 *Carl Maria von Weber*, a celebrated German composer, died in London.

SUNDAY 24th.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, by which denomination alone it is distinguished in our Calendar. In the Roman Church it is called Passion Sunday, anticipating its true station by a week, because they had other ceremonies for the Sunday immediately preceding Easter, appropriate to its other name of Palm-Sunday. In Durham, and some of the adjoining counties, it is called CARL or CARLING Sunday, and the inhabitants eat gray peas (or *carlings*), first softened in water, and then parched or fried in butter.

809 Died, *Haroun-Alraschid*, twenty-fifth Caliph, and fifth of the race of the Abbacides.

1455 Died, *Pope Nicholas V.*, a great patron of learning. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks, which happened during his pontificate, putting an end to the empire of the east, he gave an asylum in Rome to the learned men of Greece; enriching the library of the Vatican, with a great number of Greek and Hebrew manuscripts saved by them, and ordering several to be translated, under his auspices, into the Latin language.

1603 *Queen Elizabeth* departed this life at her palace at Richmond, after a glorious reign of forty-five years, and in the seventieth year of her age. She was the last monarch of the house of Tudor.

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